

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Withdrawn) A catheter comprising:
a catheter shaft including a proximal end and a distal end secured to a balloon,
a luer fitting arranged at the proximal end of the catheter shaft, the proximal end of the catheter shaft having a permanently affixed bending section, the bending section having a flexibility greater than that of the section of the catheter shaft joining the proximal end, the bending section including a plurality of offset cuts formed in the proximal end of the catheter shaft, and
a fluid impermeable covering disposed to seal the plurality of offset cuts.
- 2.-3. (Canceled)
4. (Withdrawn) The catheter according to claim 1, wherein the offset cuts extend in a direction generally parallel to one another.
- 5.-6. (Canceled)
7. (Withdrawn) The catheter according to claim 1, wherein the seal is designed as a sleeve or tube which is fastened to the proximal end of the catheter shaft.
8. (Canceled)
9. (Withdrawn) The catheter according to claim 1, wherein the bending section is formed as a soft-annealed material section of the catheter shaft.
10. (Withdrawn) The catheter according to claim 9, wherein the soft-annealed section is surrounded by a spiral spring.

11. (Withdrawn) The catheter according to claim 1, wherein the bending section is formed by a transition member of the fitting which comprises a flexible plastic material.

12. (Withdrawn) The catheter according to claim 11, wherein the transition member has an undercut which is engaged by a complementary holding member of the proximal end of the catheter shaft.

13.-14. (Canceled)

15. (Withdrawn) The catheter according to claim 1, wherein the seal is fastened by an adhesive to the proximal end of the catheter shaft.

16.-21. (Canceled)

22. (Withdrawn) A catheter comprising:
a catheter shaft including a proximal end and a distal end secured to a balloon, and
a luer fitting arranged at the proximal end of the catheter shaft,
the proximal end of the catheter shaft including a plurality of balls mounted on the proximal end of the catheter shaft and spaced to provide kink-free bending of the proximal end.

23. (Withdrawn) The catheter of claim 22, wherein the plurality of balls are affixed to the catheter shaft by an adhesive bond.

24. (Withdrawn) The catheter of claim 22, wherein the plurality of balls are mechanically coupled to the catheter shaft.

25. (Withdrawn) The catheter of claim 22, wherein the plurality of balls are affixed to the catheter shaft using a heat shrinkable tube disposed over the plurality of balls.

26. (New) A catheter comprising:
a catheter shaft having a distal end and a proximal end;
a balloon secured to the distal end; and
a fitting secured to the proximal end,
wherein the proximal end includes a permanently affixed bending section having a flexibility greater than that of the section of the catheter shaft joining the proximal end,

wherein the bending section includes a spiral cut formed in the proximal end, and wherein a fluid impermeable covering is disposed to seal the spiral cut.

27. (New) The catheter of claim 26, wherein the fitting is a luer fitting.

28. (New) The catheter of claim 26, wherein the fitting includes a passageway in flow communication with the catheter shaft.

29. (New) The catheter of claim 26, wherein the spiral cut is formed with a selectable number of spiral sections.

30. (New) The catheter of claim 26, wherein the fluid impermeable covering is shaped as a sleeve or a tube.

31. (New) The catheter of claim 26, wherein the fluid impermeable covering is adhesively bonded to the bending section.

32. (New) The catheter of claim 26, wherein the fitting comprises a transition member connected to the proximal end, and wherein the transition member is structured to prevent unintended kinking of at least a portion of the bending section.

33. (New) The catheter of claim 26, wherein the bending section is formed as a soft-annealed section of the catheter shaft.

34. (New) The catheter of claim 33, further comprising a spring surrounding the soft-annealed section.